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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was on the use of drama supplements to increase the reading fluency of first grade students in a suburban school. The subjects of this study were first grade students. They were between six and eight years old and attended a suburban school in Knoxville, Tennessee. The class contained eight girls and twelve boys. Students were randomly assigned to one of two groups. The control group was taught reading lessons from the Silver Burdett and Ginn basal readers. The experimental group received the same reading instruction, but in addition, they received drama supplements. They transformed each story they read into a play. To ensure that all children were given equal opportunity to use drama at some time during this study, the groups alternated between the control and experimental positions. After both three week modules of the study, each student from Groups A and B was given an Informal Reading Inventory. In analyzing the data for this action research project, the researcher found no significant difference in the reading fluency of the students who received traditional basal based instruction and those who received traditional basal based instruction with the drama supplements. (Contains 45 references and a table of data. Appendixes contain permission letters.) (Author/RS)

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ED 451 474

# A COMPARISON OF FIRST GRADE CHILDREN RECEIVING TRADITIONAL INSTRUCTION OR TRADITIONAL INSTRUCTION WITH DRAMA SUPPLEMENTS AND ITS EFFECTS ON READING FLUENCY

An Action Research Project

Presented to

the Department of Teacher Education

of Johnson Bible College

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirement for the Degree

Master of Arts in

Holistic Education

by

Jessica Ann Huey

July 2000

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was on the use of drama supplements to increase the reading fluency of first grade students in a suburban school. The researcher designed this study to determine if there was a significant difference between students who received traditional basal based reading instruction and those who received traditional basal based reading instruction with drama supplements.

The subjects of this study were first grade students. They were between six and eight years old and attended a suburban school in Knoxville, Tennessee. The class contained eight girls and twelve boys. There were two ESL (English as a Second Language) students and one boy who was hearing impaired, although these characteristics are not considered necessary to this research.

Students were grouped by random selection. Two groups were needed to conduct this study. The researcher put the names of all of the students in a hat and drew the names out of the hat and put them alternatively in Group A or B. The control group was taught reading lessons from the Silver Burdett and Ginn basal readers. The experimental group received the same reading instruction, but in addition, they received drama supplements. They transformed each story they read into a play. To insure that all children were given equal opportunity to use drama at some time during this study, the groups alternated between the control and experimental positions. For the first three weeks of the study, Group A was the experimental group and Group B was the control

group. For the second three weeks, Group A was the control group and Group B was the experimental group.

After both three week modules of the study, each student from Groups A and B was given an Informal Reading Inventory. The data were examined using a t test.

The statistical analysis of this research project focused on the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups. Each unit was combined for the statistical analysis. The students were not tested after each unit because the hypothesis was interested the conceptual teaching, not the specific details of each unit.

In analyzing the data for this action research project, the researcher found no significant difference in the reading fluency of the students who received traditional basal based instruction and those who received traditional basal based instruction with the drama supplements.

APPROVAL PAGE

This Action Research Project by Jessica Huey is accepted in its present form by the Department of Teacher Education at Johnson Bible College as satisfying the action research project requirements for the degree Master of Arts in Holistic Education.

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Chapter 1

# INTRODUCTION

## Significance of the Problem

Children who do not learn to read at an early age may have trouble reading or learning to read later in life. The inability to read well may be a barrier to people desiring to obtain a higher education. The ability to read well also enhances a persons reading pleasure. According to the National Institute for Literacy, more than 20 percent of all adults read at or below a fifth-grade level, which is far below the level needed to secure a minimum wage job. According to the National Adult Literacy Survey, millions of Americans over the age of 16 have significant literacy needs. That is why it is important for children to learn how to read well at an early age. Basal-based curriculum is effective for teaching reading. Basal-based reading programs offer passages for the children to read, comprehension questions related to the story, and also activities for the children to learn new vocabulary. Basal-based curriculums are commonly used in public schools and are most effective for children who have the verbal/linguistic intelligence (Gardner, 1993). However, this type of curriculum may not be as beneficial for those children who, according to Gardner, have strengths in different intelligences. Children with other intelligences may need to have a curriculum that will be conducive to their particular learning styles. Therefore, using the activities for other intelligences may improve the reading level of these students.

Statement of the Problem

This study will investigate what effect dramatic activities may have on reading fluency. The traditional approach is to use basal readers to teach reading. In this present study the researcher will compare the relationship between the group that receives a traditional basal instruction and a group that receives the traditional instruction with a drama supplement.

Definition of Terms

IRI: The Informal Reading Inventory determines the reading level and specific strengths and weaknesses in word recognition, published by The Center for Applied Research in Education.

Literacy: Literacy is defined by the National Literacy Act as an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one's goals, and develop one's knowledge and potential.

Fluency: The level of fluency is determined by score that remains after the number of word substitutions, omissions, insertions, transportations (switching words around), and prompted words made by the student are subtracted from the mean score.

Traditional Instruction: This instruction uses the basal reading curriculum used by the school (Silver Burdett & Ginn).

Experimental Instruction: This instruction uses the basal reading curriculum used by the school (Silver Burdett & Ginn), but there also be dramatic instruction. The group will turn each story into a dramatic production.

Limitations

The class is not a random sample of first grade students. This sample is only one first-grade class from one school, however the students were randomly assigned to two groups.

This study will be conducted with a class in which all the students were selected by the principal of the school.

The researcher is also the teacher of this pre-selected class.

The same students will be used in the traditional and the experimental group.

The researcher does not know if the order in presentation (of experiences) will have an effect on the mean scores.

Assumptions

The researcher and the teacher will be consistent in teaching the research content.

The ability level of the students will be normally distributed in each group.

Hypothesis

There is no difference in the fluency level of students who receive the traditional basal instruction and those who use drama with the traditional reading instruction at the .05 level of significance as measured by the IRI.

Chapter 2

# REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

## Multiple Intelligences

A teacher has the responsibility to help children understand how information fits together and why it is important (Bellanca, 1998). The teacher must try to meet the needs of diverse learners. "There is an ever-increasing diverse range of student abilities, as well as a multiplicity of intelligences, present in our schools. Each and every child has a great capacity to learn when exposed to effective and relevant learning strategies" (Green, 1999). Since the 1985 publication of his book Frames of Mind, Howard Gardner' Theory of Multiple Intelligence has been a growing trend in meeting this educational need. When implementing this theory in the classroom, a teacher must understand the definition of the theory, some of its implication, and also other important aspects.

In the interview with Kathy Checkey, Gardner defines intelligence as, "The human ability to solve problems or to make something that is valued in one or more cultures". The ability must also have a particular representation in the brain (Green, 1999). Gardner suggests that rather than a person having one or two intelligences, all human being have several intelligences. However, all humans have different strengths in each intelligence area (Gardner, cited by Checkley, 1997). Gardner identifies eight intelligences. The verbal/linguistic intelligence is the "ability to use with clarity the core operations of language. The communicating of humans by reading, writing, listening, speaking and linking are the significant components of this intelligence" (Chapman,

1993). The logical-mathematical intelligence includes "the ability to discern logical or numerical patterns and the ability to prosecute extended lines of reasoning or to skillfully handle increasingly abstract tiers of analysis" (Haggerty, 1995). The spatial intelligence is the "capability to form a mental model of a spatial world and to operate using that model" (Green, 1997). The bodily kinesthetic intelligence is "the capacity to handle objects skillfully, including both gross and fine motor movements and the ability to control one's bodily movements" (Haggerty, 1995). Musical intelligence is the ability to form and comprehend musical patterns and to think in music. Interpersonal intelligence is the ability to work cooperatively with others and the ability to understand other people. The intrapersonal intelligence is the ability to understand oneself (Green, 1997). The eighth intelligence is the naturalist intelligence refers to the "ability to recognize and classify plants, minerals, and animals, including rocks and grass and all variety of flora and fauna. The ability to recognize cultural artifacts like cars or sneakers may also depend on the naturalist intelligence" (Gardner, cited by Checkley, 1997). These eight intelligences make up Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences.

Many teachers implement Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences into their classrooms. Many teachers may try to determine a student's intellectual profile. Gardner feels this important to understand how a child learns, but this should not be used as a means in itself. This knowledge should be used to help the students reach a better level of understanding or a higher level of skill (Gardner, cited by Checkley, 1997). Mallonee implemented the multiple intelligences into a music classroom. The students selected a piece of music to study, read it aloud, and pronounce the foreign words, if the text was written in a foreign language. This required using the verbal/linguistic intelligence. For

the logical/mathematical intelligence, the students sight read the music and determined patterns and sequences. Then the students found art to match the mood of the piece of music (visual/spatial). The bodily/kinesthetic intelligence could be incorporated by having the students tap the beat of the song. To incorporate the interpersonal intelligence, Mallonee suggests having the students sing in small groups. Finally, the intrapersonal intelligence can be incorporated by having the students keep a music journal or by having the students feel the music internally. Implementing multiple intelligences into the classroom does not mean that each intelligence must be used in each activity. It may not be possible to incorporate every intelligence in every activity. If a teacher does try to do this, some of the activities may be meaningless. The point of implementing this theory into the classroom is to help the students learn. The activities must be meaningful. The key to implementing the intelligences is to "decide on the facts and procedures a teacher wants a student to understand, and then to figure out how best to present this information, given the student's strengths and weaknesses" (Collins, 1998).

Many studies have been conducted in which the multiple intelligences have been implemented into the classroom. Ellingson, Long, and McCullough constructed a study to determine if the use of multiple intelligences in the classroom would improve the motivation of students. Activities incorporating the multiple intelligences into daily lesson plans were used in the experimental classes. Sometimes they sang songs or performed chants. Storytelling, puzzles, paintings, role-playing, problem solving, and cooperative games were used in the daily lesson plans. Using these activities in the classroom helped motivate the students to accomplish daily tasks such as bringing materials to class, staying on task, and using time wisely (Ellingson, Long, and

McCullough, 1997). The students were eager to learn because they were interested in the activities. This motivated them to accomplish daily tasks. Gens, Provance, VanDuyne, and Zimmerman conducted a study on the effects of integrating a multiple intelligence based language arts curriculum on reading comprehension of first and second grade students. The students they studied were first and second graders who were average to below average readers. They had difficulty with new vocabulary. Many children came from homes in which the parents had legal, financial, and alcohol problems. These home problems have a major effect on the child's well-being. Many of the children grew up in non-reading homes. This was a twelve week study. Each unit in the study took one week. On the first day of the week, the story was introduced to the children. On the second, third, and fourth day of the study, all of the multiple intelligences were incorporated into the classroom through the use of learning centers. On the fifth day comprehension tests were given. At the end of the study, all the subjects demonstrated a growth in one grade level in vocabulary and comprehension (Gens, et al, 1998).

There are many aspects that a teacher must remember when trying to implement the intelligences. First, the traditional method is not all wrong. "There are many high-achieving students who thrive with the traditional approach to teaching" (Collins, 1998). Second, it is difficult to change one's teaching style (Collins, 1998). Many teachers may implement the intelligences gradually so they can become more comfortable with their new methods. Finally, one must consider that Gardner never formed a detailed plan for implementing his theory into the schools. Because of this, there are many methods that may fall under the name of multiple intelligences, but Gardner may not approve of them. When implementing this, all of these aspects must be carefully considered.

Multiple Intelligences and Reading Literacy

Alberto and Brown conducted a study that dealt with improving reading through the use of multiple intelligences. The study was conducted in a school with a predominantly white staff and student body. Four, first-grade classrooms were used in this study. The weekly lessons included activities for all of the multiple intelligences. They used cooperative groups, self-assessments, journals, reading logs, portfolios, sequencing, patterning, song, and once a week the classes did dramatic skits. The results showed a 20-30% increase in the tested areas of vocabulary, comprehension, literature recognition and appreciation, decoding, and study skills. There was also a growth in the self-awareness of the students. The students were also using higher level thinking. They were more motivated and their behavior and interpersonal relationships improved (Alberto, Brown, and Wind, 1997). It is beneficial to implement multiple intelligence activities into the reading curriculum.

Reading Literacy

In order to function in modern society, a person must be able to read. "The ability to read is highly valued and important for social and economic advancement" (Burns, Griffin, Snow, 1998). That is one reason why it is important for children to learn how to read. "Literacy is used for experience and success every day" (Alberto, Brown, and Wind, 1997). "Children in a literate society grow up with literacy as an integral part of their personal, familial, and social histories. Interacting with their literate environment, children invent their own literacies, and their inventions often parallel the inventions of literacy by society as a whole" (Goodman, as cited by Sulzby and Teale, 1986). In order for the literacy level of society to increase, it is important that children learn how to read.

Children have the opportunity to gain a great appreciation for literature, or just reading in general. In order for them to have this opportunity, education must provide a foundation of reading. Teachers, especially those teaching early reading must build a strong program for developing reading, especially emergent reading (literacy). The teacher must also help students who are having difficulties with reading. There are also some supplemental programs, such as Beacons and Head Start (see page 12) that can enhance reading literacy development. By effectively utilizing the reading programs in school and supplemental reading programs, children can learn how to read. This, in effect, will increase the literacy development of society as a whole.

Teachers have a responsibility to help their students build a firm reading foundation. Swann conducted a study in order to determine whether or not the Emergent Reader Literacy Instruction (ERLI) was effective with first grade students. This program incorporates phonics, basal texts, literature, and writing instruction. Some activities included in this program are word wall/making words, self-directed reading, and writing. First grade children from Lexington, South Carolina were selected for this study. There were 100 students in the control group and 100 in the experimental group. The experimental group received the Emergent Reader Literacy Instruction. At the end of the study, the students were given the Basic Reading Inventory, Sixth Edition. The group that received the ERLI performed significantly better at the frustration level for vocabulary and the independent level for comprehension (Swann, 1997). In this same study, 557 ERLI students and 557 control students were given the Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery (CSAB). The group receiving the ERLI scored higher on the total reading subtest, the reading vocabulary test, the reading comprehension subtest, and the

language subtest (Swann, 1997). This type of instructional program is very effective for teaching children how to read. In the earliest grades reading instruction should emphasize comprehension, daily reading of texts, independent reading, sight recognition of frequent words, and familiarity with spelling (Burns, Griffin, and Snow, 1998). The teacher should also provide opportunities for students to practice reading in a variety of ways such as choral, individual, and partner reading. The instruction must also be adapted to meet the diverse needs of the learners (Burns, Griffin, and Snow 1998). It is also important for teachers to allow children to take an active role in their education. "Children need opportunities to develop actions that are productive as they begin to build an early reading and writing process. These opportunities put children in control of what they know, even if it seems to be very little at first" (Askew, 1998). Teachers need to provide the students with opportunities to take an active role in their own learning process. Putting children in control of what they know will encourage them to become active learners. They will be able to monitor their own reading and writing. They will also be able to make new discoveries for themselves. This does not mean that the child should have control over his/her learning. The teacher is the guide so that the children have an example of how to engage in self-direction that is purposeful (Askew, 1998). The teacher should have the student work from the instructional level of reading. This will allow the child more opportunities to solve problems on their own or with guided assistance (Askew, 1998). Doing this will not only allow the student to take an active role in their education, but it will also encourage the children to become independent readers, which will lead to a lifetime of education (Smith, Tracy, and Weber, 1998).

Many children will learn to read with good instruction, but some will not. Some children may have disabilities such as dyslexia or specific reading retardation that may impede their ability to learn to read. Some children may be going through times of economic, physical, social, or emotional distress at the time these new concepts are introduced (Burns, Griffin, and Snow, 1998). There are also other factors that may effect the child when learning to read. If the parents of the child speak a different language, this may confuse the child. Whatever the difficulty, it is the responsibility of educators to help the children with reading difficulties. Some extra instruction time may be required. "The purpose of providing extra instructional time is to help children achieve the levels of literacy that will enable them to be successful through their school careers and beyond. It is not simply to boost early literacy achievement" (Burns, Griffin, and Snow, 1998). One way to help student overcome literacy problems is the use of programs such as Reading Recovery, peer partner reading, or reading one-on-one. The Reading Recovery program includes engaging the child in rereading books independently, identifying letters, constructing words and sentences, and reading a new book with support from the teacher (Burns, Griffin, and Snow, 1998). Peer-partner reading is also effective. The students form multi-level groups of two or three and then they help each other read texts. Tutoring the child one-on-one is also effective. In this case, the tutor can determine the specific needs of the students and focus on fulfilling these needs. Computer programs such as talking books and storybook software can also be used to help the child (Burns, Griffin, and Snow, 1998). Sometimes after school programs provide children with extra help in reading. The Beacons after school program is one example of this sort of program. Beacons "seek to link community-based youth organizations with schools to

build supportive communities for youth to meet their needs and to assist them in building academic and social skills to become self-sufficient and successful young adults" (Rice, 1997). Literacy is seen as one of the most valuable resources a human can possess. Reading and communication skills are the foundations on which other skills are based. Without these skills, a student's self-esteem will lower and he will gain distaste for reading and writing. However, this can be prevented if reading is presented as an enjoyable activity" (Rice, 1997). Beacons teaches the skill necessary for reading such as word attack skills, sight vocabulary, and comprehension. They also feel it is important to inspire the children to read by making reading fun. This can be done by acting out a skit, conducting a debate, or even writing a reaction to the story (Rice, 1997). This program has been very successful in encouraging children to read. Helping the students by using these methods may be just what the child needs to improve his/her skills in reading.

Research has been conducted to determine the effectiveness of programs that provide aid to those who have difficulty reading. A study on the outcomes of emergent literacy intervention from Head Start through second grade was conducted by Andrea, Crone, Schultz, Whitehurst, and Zevenbergen. In 1992-3, 127 students in 17 classrooms within 19 school districts were randomly selected to receive reading training through the Head Start program. In 1993-4, as similar group was selected containing 153 students in 20 classrooms. They were given a pretest (before the treatment) that tested memory, auditory concepts, print concepts, functions of print, and writing. After they received the treatment they were given a posttest and follow up tests before first and second grade. The scores for each section of the pretest rose significantly after the treatment and they continued to rise in the follow up tests. The Head Start program worked very well. It

taught the students the skills they needed to be successful in other grade levels (Andrea et al, 1999).

Reading literacy is a skill that is necessary in life and if it is not taught in the younger grades, it will effect the way that a person functions in society. "Literacy is used for experience and success every day" (Alberto, Brown, and Wind, 1997). Educators have a major role in preparing students for the future by equipping them with the necessary skills.

The Role of Drama in Literacy

Drama is a very effective tool that can be used when teaching literacy. "Drama increases creativity, originality, sensitivity, flexibility, cooperation, examination of moral attitudes and decisions, while developing communication skills and appreciation of books and literature" (Rice, 1997). There are many ways in which drama can be useful and can be implemented into the literacy (language arts) curriculum. There have also been studies that portray how drama can be used effectively in the classroom.

Drama serves many purposes in the classroom. Drama helps children with their language and communication skills. Children need to be "Learning to rely on one another for their ideas and therefore using a considerable amount of language for discussion, argument, agreement and disagreement, organization and execution" (Maley and Duff, 1978). Communication is a form of literacy. It requires interpersonal and intrapersonal skills to communicate in ways that are necessary for a dramatic production on any scale. Drama encompasses many aspects of literacy such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. "When used in teaching the language arts, drama can further the teacher's goals and strengthen the students' abilities in all of these areas. Most teachers

find drama to be a strong motivation for reading and vocabulary building" (McCaslin, 1968). Drama is central to a child's language process. By using drama, the children are essentially involved in the processes of "thinking, abstracting, interacting, talking, speaking, listening, and communicating in drama experience that was 'exciting and fun' for everyone" (Siks, 1977). It encompasses most of Gardner's multiple intelligences.

Not only does drama help to meet the education needs of diverse learners, but it can also be implemented into the classroom quite easily. Any story can be turned into a script and even into a full production. Also mime can also be used quite effectively. Every story does not need to have words. The children can tell the story using body movements. Also, Reader's Theatre can be used in the classroom (Johnson and Louis, 1987). Reader's theatre is a form of dramatic interpretation in which the actor's sit (or stand) in a group and read their parts directly from a script, as in the production of radio plays" (Johnson and Louis, 1987). Using drama in the classroom not only meets the needs of the diverse learners by encompassing all of the multiple intelligences, but it is also a way to let the students know that reading can be fun.

Recent research displays different ways that drama can be used to teach literacy. Utilizing experiences such as drama can encourage a child to use higher order thinking. "Csikszentmihalyi (1996) explained that aesthetic experiences not only improve the critical and reflective thinking of students, but also facilitate powerful emotional and motivational processes" (Berghoff, 1998). Using aesthetic experiences, such as drama, can get the child more interested and want to learn more and ask more questions. Drama is interesting to students and they all have the chance to participate. "Drama is an

invaluable tool for educators because it is one of the few vehicles of instruction that can support every aspect of literacy development" (McMaster, 1998).

Also, drama can encompass most of Gardner's multiple intelligences. It can encompass the verbal/linguistic intelligence very easily because drama usually deals with spoken language. By using gestures and choreography, it utilizes the bodily/kinesthetic intelligence. If the cast creates the set, then the visual intelligence is used. The actor works independently on developing his/her own character and that involves the interpersonal intelligence. When the cast works together they use intrapersonal skills. The musical intelligence can be incorporated into drama by either playing music to fit the mood of scene or by having the actors tap a beat or something of that nature. The more students act out stories, the more interested they become in literature. This makes them desire to read even more and discover what kind of adventures are awaiting them (McMaster, 1998).

Drama in the classroom improves student's skills. "Drama use in the classroom showed a positive effect on children's comprehension, communication skill, and people perception (Kardash and Wright, 1987, as cited by Morrison and Chilcoat, 1998). Morrison and Chilcoat wrote an article discussing the use of "Living Newspaper Theatre" in a language arts classroom. In 1935, the Works Progress Administration organized the Federal Theater Project. This project would allow the production of shows that would be affordable to the public and would provide jobs for actors. These shows would also benefit the public in that the shows would inform the public of current issues and events. Unfortunately this program lost its funding in 1939. However, this would be a great activity to use in the classroom. It would integrate social studies and language arts while

encompassing all of the multiple intelligences. This activity also helps the student understand theme development, plot and scene development, characterization, and dialogue, which are all very important aspects of literacy (Morrison and Chilcoat, 1998).

A study conducted by Martinez, Roser, and Strecher demonstrates the effect that the use of Reader's Theatre has on oral reading fluency. This ten week study had a control group and an experimental group. The experimental group worked with Reader's Theatre selections for the whole ten weeks while the control group spent the whole ten weeks learning by traditional methods. Each student was given a pre-test and a post-test. At the conclusion of the study, the experimental group increased their rate of oral fluency on the average of 17 words per minute while the control group only improved 6.9 words per minute. Many also gained levels on the IRI test (which was used for the pre and post-tests). In the experimental group, nine students gained two levels, fourteen gained one level and five gained no level. In the control group three gained two levels, thirteen gained one level and twelve gained no level (Martinez, Roser, and Strecher, 1999). Drama improves not only the rate of fluency, but also the total literacy skill level of students.

Chapter 3

# METHODS AND PROCEDURES

## Selection of Subjects

This study was conducted in a first-grade class in an eastern Tennessee school that is strongly suburban but was moving toward a mixture of suburban and urban. There were 750 students in the school and 120 students (16%) received free lunches, which meant that they were below poverty level. In this first grade class, the age ranged from six to seven years of age. The intelligence of the students was assumed to be normally distributed. There were 21 students in this first-grade class. Included in this study were one student who is in the CDC (Comprehensive Developmental Classroom), one who was hearing impaired, and two ESL (English as a Second Language) students.

## Testing Procedures

The class of 21, first-grade students was randomly divided into a group of ten and a group of eleven. Even though the class in itself was not randomly selected, the two groups were randomly selected within this class. Their names were drawn from a hat and put into the two groups. For three weeks group A received reading instruction as detailed by the Silver-Burdett and Ginn basal reading curriculum only. Each week the students read selections from the basal reader. Nothing was added to the curriculum in the way of supplemental activities. For three weeks, group B also received reading instruction from the Silver-Burdett and Ginn first-grade curriculum, but they received supplemental drama activities. The students of group B turned each of the stories into theatrical sketches,

which were performed within group B. For reasons of experimental control, group A did not see group B perform the dramatic sketch. After three weeks, the groups were given the IRI, the Center for Applied Research in Education form. Then the groups then switched and group B received the traditional instruction and group A received the traditional instruction with the drama supplement. After these three weeks, the students were given the IRI, the Center for Applied Research in Education form. Then the mean scores from both groups receiving traditional instruction were compared to the mean scores of both groups receiving traditional instruction with drama supplements.

Time on Task

This study will took place over six weeks. Each group was given instruction for 20 minutes a day, five days a week. After three weeks of the study, the groups switched and received the other form of instruction. Both groups were tested after each three week instructional period.

Statistical Analysis

The mean scores from the tests of those receiving the traditional basal instruction were compared to the tests of those receiving the traditional instruction with the drama supplement (experimental). Since the IRI uses percentage scores, the tests were scored by counting the number of words in each passage and subtracting the number of mistakes from the number of words. This gave a score that can be used in determining the mean scores. The IRI was also a progressive test in that one may have exceeded the ability level of one test and may advance to a higher-level test. A child in the first grade may have been able to successfully complete the pre-primer, primer, first, and second grade test. In order to obtain a score, the final word count from each of these tests were added

to form that student's total score on the IRI. A t-test was utilized in comparison of the mean scores.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Analysis of Data

Since the researcher did not examine each reading unit as a separate unit, the scores for each set of units were combined for the statistical analysis. There were twenty-one students involved in the study, but one students was not included in the statistical analysis because his special needs prevented him from being consistently involved in the study. Since each student received traditional basal instruction and traditional basal instruction with drama supplements, there were 20 sets of scores for the group receiving traditional basal instruction and twenty sets of scores for the group receiving traditional basal instruction with drama supplements. Therefore, twenty sets of data were used in the analysis of the results.

In order to determine if the group receiving traditional basal instruction and the group receiving traditional basal instruction with drama supplements were relatively equal, a t test was run to compare the control group's test scores to the experimental group's test scores. There was no statistical significant difference between the two groups at the end of the study (see Table 1).

Acceptance or Rejection of the Hypothesis

The data of the study showed that there was no statistical difference in the fluency level of students who receive the traditional basal instruction and those who used

drama with the traditional reading instruction at the .05 level of significance as measured by the IRI. The hypothesis was retained.

TABLE 1

COMPARISON OF MEANS OF CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

| Groups | N | Mean | Mean Difference | Std. Error of Means | t ratio | Sig. 2-tailed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control | 20 | 370.25 | 3.75 | 41.48 | .090 | .929* |
| Experimental | 20 | 366.50 | | | | |

* Not Significant at .05 Level

Chapter 5

# SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

## Summary of Research Study

The results of this study showed that there was not a statistical significant difference in reading fluency among students who received traditional basal instruction and those who used drama with the traditional basal reading instruction. Even though the results were not statistically significant, the scores seemed to create a bell curve. The scores were normally distributed within the sample. It was also noticed that many students from both groups scored higher on the IRI's after the final session of the study. Since the increase in scores was evident in both groups, the improvement was not attributed to the drama supplements, but perhaps to the rate at which the children were learning how to read. However, the research project gave the researcher the opportunity to implement activities for multiple intelligences into the classroom setting. The students were given the opportunity to create their own plays for the stories they read from the basal readers. They created their own sets using materials in the classroom. They even given the opportunity to perform their plays for the principal and the rest of their classmates once the study was complete.

## Conclusions

The results of this study would be beneficial to any school that is trying to decide whether or not to use drama to teach reading. While the results were not statistically significant, from observation it appeared that the students were more excited about

reading because they got the opportunity to make each story into a dramatic presentation. There was not a difference between the scores of those students who received traditional basal reading instruction and those who used drama with the traditional basal reading instruction.

Even though the results did not show a statistical significance, the format of the groups helped some of the students learn how to read with more fluency. According to the IRI given, one student in particular greatly improved her reading fluency. Since the groups were formed by random selection, the ability levels of the students were equally distributed within the two groups. The students were very concerned with helping the students who did not have a high rate of reading fluency. From the observation of the researcher, it seemed that peer assistance may have helped some students improve their reading skills. After the research was complete, two students were tested and moved into higher level reading groups.

Recommendations

The researcher observed many aspects of the study that could be improved or changed in the future. First, it is recommended that any future research be conducted with a larger group of students. It is possible that the lack of statistical significance could be attributed to the small sample size (twenty students) that were involved in the study.

Another concern of the researcher is that the length of time in which the study was conducted was too short to display any statistical significance. It is recommended that the time to conduct this study is increased. The students will then be better acquainted with the process used to create a dramatic presentation of a story and less time

will be consumed with learning this process. Then more time can be used for multiple readings of the selections.

It is also recommended that this study be replicated with students in educational settings that are different from a suburban school. It is possible that the results would vary depending on the group of children that was studied. To get the best idea of the effect of using drama to teach reading fluency, it should be conducted with all levels and socio-economic groups of students. If such groups were studied, a more general conclusion could be drawn.

The researcher observed that some of the students may have benefited from the multi-level groups. The multi-level groups may be controlled by randomly selecting the sample to be studied. It may be beneficial for research to be conducted on how using multi-level groups in reading instruction effect reading fluency of first grade students.

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APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

KNOX COUNTY SCHOOLS
ANDREW JOHNSON BUILDING

*Dr. Charles Q. Lindsey, Superintendent*

November 2, 1999

Ms. Jessica A. Huey
Johnson Bible College, Box 249
Knoxville, Tennessee 37998

Dear Ms. Huey:

You are granted permission to contact appropriate building-level administrators concerning the conduct of your proposed research study entitled, "A Comparison of First Grade Children Receiving Traditional Instruction or Traditional Instruction with Drama Supplements and Its Effects on Reading Fluency." In the Knox County schools final approval of any research study is contingent upon acceptance by the principal(s) at the site(s) where the study will be conducted.

In all research studies names of individuals, groups, or schools may not appear in the text of the study unless *specific* permission has been granted through this office. The principal researcher is required to furnish this office with one copy of the completed research document.

Good luck with your study. Do not hesitate to contact me if you need further assistance or clarification.

Yours truly,

Samuel E. Bratton, Jr.

Samuel E. Bratton, Jr., Ed.D.
Coordinator of Research and Evaluation
Phone: (423) 594-1740
Fax: (423) 594-1709

Project No. 017



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## APPENDIX B

Dear Parents,

If you have not had the opportunity to meet me yet, my name is Miss Huey. I am very excited to be working with Mrs. Countiss this year. I have enjoyed helping her teach your children. We have a lot of interesting things planned for the rest of the year.

I am working on an action research project for the completion of my Master of Arts degree. I am adding a supplemental activity to the reading curriculum. This study will last six weeks. For the first three weeks, half of the class will get the opportunity to perform dramatic presentations based on the stories in the basal reader. Then they will be tested to see if this method improved their reading fluency. During this time the other half of the class will receive the regular reading instruction. For the second three weeks, the groups will switch so that every child has a chance to participate in dramatic activities. The child's score on the fluency test will NOT be included as part of the students' grades. This is just an experiment to test my theory.

I am very excited about this study and I would greatly appreciate your approval. I would also appreciate one hundred percent participation of the class for this project. Thank you very much!

Vicki H. Andrews

Vicki Andrews

Tammy Countiss

Tammy Countiss

Jessica Huey

Jessica Huey

Parent Signature

APPENDIX C

Name _____ Grade ____ Teacher _____ Date _____

## ORAL READING PASSAGE

### DICK'S BIG DOG*

Dick has a big dog.

The dog's name is Sam.

Sam is a big, black dog.

Dick and Sam like to run.

Sam has a red ball.

He likes to run after the ball.

Sam likes to jump too.

He likes to eat dog food.

Dick likes to play with Sam.

Dick and Sam have fun.

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*The readability level of this passage was computed by the Spache Readability Formula.

Name _____ Grade ____ Teacher _____ Date _____

## ORAL READING PASSAGE

### THE NINE PUPPIES*

We have a large tan dog. She had nine puppies in the fall. The puppies were little and could not see. The mother dog fed them milk. The puppies got bigger.

Then the puppies walked and ran. They played too. The puppies liked to eat. They ate and ate all the time! The puppies got bigger and bigger. They played and played.

One day a boy came and took a puppy home. A girl came and took a puppy home too. Boys and girls all were happy. The puppies all were happy too. I was not happy. I liked the nine puppies. I wanted them all at my house!

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*The readability level of this passage was computed by the Spache Readability Formula.

Name _____ Grade ____ Teacher _____ Date _____

ORAL READING PASSAGE

## STOP FOR TURTLES*

Have you ever stopped for a turtle? Many men and women do just that when they are driving in the big woods.

In the summer turtles walk from one side of roads to the other side. The turtles are dark green and can be big or little. Some of them are as little as a little dish. Some of them are as big as the top of a big, big basket. The turtles walk on the busy roads where there are many cars and trucks. Some of them want to lay eggs on the other side of the road.

Most men and women who live in the big woods like turtles. That is why they stop when they see a turtle and wait for it if they can. They may get out of the car or truck and stop other cars and trucks. Then the turtle can walk to the other side of the road. A turtle may bite. That is why a man or woman will stay away from them.

*The readability level of this passage was computed by the Spache Readability Formula.

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Name _____ Grade ____ Teacher _____ Date _____

## ORAL READING PASSAGE

### BEN AND THE PORCUPINE*#

Ben is a brown and white dog that lives in the North Woods with his family. He likes to run and play in the woods whenever he can. One day last summer Ben met a porcupine in the woods.

Ben is a friendly dog who doesn't want trouble. When he met the porcupine, he just wanted to play with it. He ran over to the porcupine and touched it with his nose. The porcupine didn't understand that Ben just wanted to play. He was afraid of Ben and raised his very sharp quills.

Poor Ben! He ran home howling with porcupine quills all over his head and body. His owners tried to pull out the quills, but this hurt him too much. They had to take Ben to the vet who made him sleep while he pulled out all of those quills. Ben had eighty-one quills all over his head and body! He even had one quill sticking out of his nose.

Today Ben is just fine, but he stays away from porcupines!

*The readability level of this passage was computed by the Spache Readability Formula.
#This is a true story.

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Name _____ Grade ____ Teacher _____ Date _____

ORAL READING PASSAGE

## THE BEAGLE BRIGADE*

If you go to an airport in a large city in our country, you may be surprised to see a small, friendly dog there. This small Beagle may be wearing a green coat and walking around the baggage.

One such Beagle is named Jackpot, and he works at an airport in New York City. His job is to check luggage and packages that are being brought into this country. When Jackpot picks up the scent of food or plants that cannot be brought here, he is trained to sit down by it.

Many kinds of foods, plants, and animal products cannot be brought here because they may carry insects or other things that could infect our crops or animals. In his work at the airport Jackpot has found many different kinds of foods, plants, and even birds.

Jackpot was trained by first putting a little piece of meat into an empty box. When he found the box with the meat, Jackpot was trained to sit down by it and was given a reward. Next meat was hidden with other things such as clothes, shoes, bread, and candy. Later the trainer left out the meat and used fruits like oranges, lemons, and limes. Now instead of a reward Jackpot is given praise or a pat on the head when he finds something that cannot come into this country.

Dogs like Jackpot are better at smelling than any machine that could ever be used.

*The readability level of this passage was computed by the Spache Readability Formula.

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Name _____ Grade ____ Teacher _____ Date _____

## ORAL READING PASSAGE

### PRESIDENT CLINTON'S CHILDHOOD*

As everyone probably knows, Bill Clinton is the forty-second president of the United States. However, you may not be aware of how his childhood has shaped him into the man that he now has become.

President Clinton was born Billy Blythe in Hope, Arkansas, in 1946. Unfortunately, his father was killed in an automobile accident several months before his birth. Since Billy's mother needed to go to nursing school so that she could support him, Billy spent much of his first four years living with his grandparents. His grandparents taught him to read and to do arithmetic when he was only three years old. His grandfather owned a small grocery store in a mostly black neighborhood in Hope. He taught Billy the importance of respecting all people no matter what race they were.

When Billy was four years old, his mother married Roger Clinton, and the family moved to a farm near Hot Springs, Arkansas. Billy was a highly intelligent child who could read the newspaper when he was in first grade. Everyone who knew Billy liked him very much since he treated each person with respect.

When Bill was ten years old, his mother had a baby, and Bill then had a new stepbrother named Roger Jr. Unfortunately, Bill's stepfather was an alcoholic who sometimes flew into rages and slapped and punched Bill's mother. Once he fired a gun into the living room wall and had to go to jail.

When Bill was fourteen, he told his stepfather that the violence had to stop. Although it did stop, the drinking continued. To make his mother happy, Bill Blythe legally changed his name to Bill Clinton in 1960. In spite of the turmoil in his childhood, Bill continued to be an excellent, ambitious student.

*The readability level of this passage was computed by the Dale-Chall Readability Formula.

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Name _____ Grade ____ Teacher _____ Date _____

## ORAL READING PASSAGE

### TROPICAL RAIN FORESTS OF THE WORLD*

A tropical rain forest is a beautiful, emerald-green forest that is warm, moist, and quiet. It essentially looks like it did millions of years ago. In a rain forest the trees grow tall and close together blocking out the sunshine to the forest floor below. It is so quiet since the wind cannot move the dense top leaves.

Over two hundred million people live in the world's tropical rain forests. People in a tropical rain forest live mainly by hunting, fishing, and eating wild fruits. In some rain forests the people live in houses made of poles and palm leaves, while in other forests the houses may be built of wood. Some children who live there do not go to school but instead learn what they need to survive from their parents and other adults. They may learn to hunt deer, wild pigs, and other animals. They also may learn to grow vegetables.

Many of the foods that you eat were first grown in a rain forest. Some of these foods are corn, sweet potatoes, rice, oranges, and chocolate. Today coffee beans, vanilla, and cinnamon are only grown in tropical rain forests. These forests also are very important to doctors and medical research. Many of the drugs that are now sold in drug stores first came from plants in a rain forest. Many waxes, flavorings, and dyes also come from the tropical rain forests of the world.

However, the tropical rain forests of the world are now in danger. People are cutting down the trees for firewood or lumber. More than 40% of the world's tropical rain forests have already been destroyed. The clearing and burning of the forests is called deforestation, and many scientists believe that it must be stopped.

*The readability level of this passage was computed by the Dale-Chall Readability Formula.

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